

A NEW CAECUM FROM THE TROPICAL WESTERN ATLANTIC¹

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In the summer of 1968 I was asked by George Radwin, then a predoctoral fellow at the U. S. National Museum, to check his identification of some marine micromollusks. The material came from Payardi Island on the Atlantic side of Panama. The island is adjacent to the city of Colon, in the Canal Zone.

An unusual specimen of the family Caecidae was included in the material. As it was a single specimen, it was put aside. A few weeks later, I was invited by Helmer Odé and Harold Geis to look over the Caecidae collected in their Texas off-shore survey. There was a wealth of material and again a single specimen of the unusual *Caecum*. Since the two specimens were clearly conspecific, it was decided to describe the species.

Caecum condylum, new species

Description: The teleoconch of *C. condylum* is cylindrical and only slightly curved for most of its length. The anterior part near the aperture is more strongly curved. Near the aperture there is a broad rounded swelling or varix. Shortly beyond this the shell terminates at the aperture.

The septum is slightly depressed and the low, somewhat pointed mucro is angled to the right. The aperture is circular and is about the same diameter as the shell on the proximal side of the varix. The ground color is white with several diffuse bands of light brown.

The sculpture consists of approximately 100 low close set annular ridges. They continue over the varix on to the aperture.

The ridges do not increase in size on the varix. The protoconch and second stage are unknown. The operculum was not observed.

Material. Holotype. Payardi Island, near Colon, on the Atlantic side of Panama. Length, 2.40 mm. Division of Mollusks, U. S. National Museum, no. 679348. Paratype. A single specimen from 27° 54' 30" N., 93° 35' 45" W., East Flower Garden Bank, Gulf of Mexico, coral debris, 18.3-23.8 m., length, 3.36 mm. Division of Mollusks, U. S. National Museum, no. 679349.

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Fig. 1. *Caecum condylum* new species. The holotype as seen from the right side. There is a slight break in the aperture.

Name. From *condylus*, the enlarged end of a bone.

Remarks. There is a considerable difference in size in the only two specimens available. They are contrasted below.

	<i>Holotype</i>	<i>Paratype</i>
Total length	2.40 mm.	3.36 mm.
Anterior diameter	0.44	0.56
Posterior diameter	0.40	0.56
Varix diameter	0.56	0.76

The chief difference in the two specimens is size. In all other respects they are closely similar. Both appear to be fully mature.

I have examined thousands of specimens of Caecidae from the western Atlantic. In all that material, it seems strange that there would be only two specimens of the new species from localities some 1500 miles apart. A possible explanation might be that it occupies a restricted habitat, and that this habitat has been little sampled for micromollusks.

C. condylum does not appear to be very closely allied to any western Atlantic species. *C. subvolutum* Folin and *C. veracruzatum* Folin are similar in shape, but they do not have the axial ridges. Those species with axial ridges, such as *C. pulchellum* Stimpson, have them much larger and fewer in number. *C. clava* Folin has an even larger terminal varix and longitudinal sculpture. Even immature specimens of *C. condylum* should be fairly easy to identify.

At first glance it would seem that this species should go into the genus *Micranellum* Bartsch 1920. The type of the genus is *Caecum crebricinctum* Carpenter 1864. In 1866, Carpenter noted that *C. crebricinctum* had the aspect, but not the sculpture of an *Elephantulum*. In this latter genus, the sculpture supposedly consists of longitudinal ridges only. Unfortunately, there are the two ex-

tremes of sculpture development, and, as more species are examined, it is seen that there is a gradual transition from one type to another.

A species being described from the Virgin Islands as *Caecum insularum* (Moore, in press) is very similar in appearance to *C. crebricinctum*. Chief differences are fewer axial ridges and the presence of very weak longitudinal ridges in *C. insularum*. This species is in turn very close to *C. imbricatum* Carpenter, a species in which axial and longitudinal sculpture is nearly equal.

C. crebricinctum is also quite similar to *C. imperforatum* Kammacher, the type species of *Caecum*. Even the coloration is much the same and the principle differences are size and number of axial ridges. The entire family seems quite homogenous, and all subdivisions should probably be at the subgeneric level. It may not be possible to separate *Caecum* s.s. from *Micranellum*. Bartsch (1920) mentions that five of the species he placed in *Micranellum* have bulbous swellings at the end of the teleoconch. This would seem to justify the establishment of a new subgenus based on *C. condylum* and the possibly related Pacific coast species, but Bartsch did not really describe any of his species nor did he figure any. Until the Pacific coast material can be examined carefully, it is best to refer the new species herein described to the genus *Caecum* without increasing the list of supraspecific names.

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